

11-9-1981

## 11/09/1981 - geno savegnago

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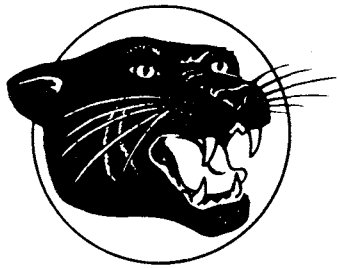
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# **Panther Sports News**

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Nov. 9, 1981  
LS-AS-Wrestling  
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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLESTON, IL--Seven All-Americans, paced by Geno Savegnago, one of the nation's top wrestlers, headline Eastern Illinois University's first Division I wrestling team.

The Panthers open the season this weekend (Nov. 13-14) at the Wisconsin Open in Stevens Point. The first home meet is Thursday, Dec. 4 against Western Illinois.

The Panthers end a five year reign as one of the top NCAA II teams with five straight top five finishes at the national tournament, but should be able to attain some recognition in their first season on the major college level.

Savegnago (Carol Stream-Glenbard North) has accomplished more than any other wrestler in EIU history. He has been a 190 lb. six-time All-American in both NCAA divisions for three years finishing 2nd, 2nd and 1st in NCAA II and 8th, 5th and 3rd in Division I.

"He's the highest place winner returning in Division I and will rank among the top three 190 lb. entering the season," says Coach Ron Clinton.

He already holds three school records and with a lifetime record of 103-19 and 38 pins will set records for most career wins and pins. He was 42-3-0 with 21 pins last season.

Savegnago, along with returning All-Americans Mike Polz (Riverside-Brookfield) at 158, Mark Gronowski (Titusville, FL) at 167 and Dennis McCormick (Springfield) at 177, give the Panthers a great upper weight lineup.

Randy Blackman (River Grove-East Leyden), an All-American in both '79 and '80, will return at 118. Derek Porter (Mims, FL-Titusville), 4th at 126 last season, will receive stiff competition from incoming freshman Mark Ruettiger (Joliet-Providence).

Ruettiger, the most highly acclaimed recruit in EIU history in any sport, left a victory trail as one of the nation's greatest prep wrestlers.

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He is the only four time state champ in Illinois history at four different weight classes. He won 105 consecutive matches which is second best all-time in Illinois, sixth nationally. His lifetime record of 152-5 puts him third in Illinois for most career wins, and sixth nationally.

Bob McGuinn (Ingleside-Grant), a three time All-American and 134 lb. national champ in '79, is overcoming a shoulder injury that sidelined him last season.

The Panthers do have depth which is of prime importance. "Champions come in pairs," says Clinton. "If someone works out regularly against high level competition, he can't help but improve . . . we think we have this championship performance in our wrestling room on a daily basis.

"It'll take a good team to beat us during the regular season . . . Geno is obviously a legit Division I All-American and Gronowski and McCormick aren't that far away.

"A lot hinges on McGuinn's health . . . if he comes back strong he could help a lot . . . if not, then we could be anywhere from great to average. We're solid at 118, 126, 142 and 158 through 190 . . . we have talent at the rest but it's inexperienced," Clinton explained.

The Panthers advance to the national tournament by first competing in a regional qualifying tournament which will be held at Louisiana State. The top three wrestlers in each class advance to nationals.